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TAJIKISTAN



SNAPSHOT

Nailing Down a Job

USAID and Mercy Corps work with communities to train vulnerable youth for productive employment



Photo: Mercy Corps/Clay Westrope

Doniyor, above, poses with one of the pieces of furniture he created during his carpentry training.

“After learning these skills, I want to reconstruct my own home and start a workshop for other apprentices.”

Doniyor Jumanov, a 17-year-old from a village two hours from the nearest city in northern Tajikistan, is particularly energized as he and the other apprentices move from one machine to the next constructing their creations.

The large two-room workshop is filled with scattered pieces of completed and half-finished furniture. Some pieces have a modern style, while others have a more traditional flair. The light coming through the large showcase window illuminates two large wooden chests and the detailed designs on them.

Explaining how he became interested in carpentry, Doniyor says, “I became interested not just for money, but because whenever I see a beautiful piece of furniture, I realize someone made it and I want to be that person.”

With tools and materials supplied by the USAID and Mercy Corps’ Tajikistan Stability Enhancement Program, and workshop space donated by the community, over 30 young men from Doniyor’s village interviewed for a chance to train with a local carpentry master. Ten apprentices were chosen for a seven-month program that would teach them the art of carpentry and furniture making.

“The first reason I was interested in this training was for myself. The second was to help my community,” Doniyor explains. “After learning these skills, I want to reconstruct my own home and start a workshop for other apprentices.”

“Many families have lots of children in my village and are unable to build homes that comfortably house all of the members of their household,” says Doniyor, as he puts the finishing touches on a chest. “When I have my own workshop, I want to build cheaper homes, for people with many children, and employ people from the community, so that the construction methods are sustainable.”

With the other apprentices having similar dreams, this village is sure to have skilled craftsmen – and productive jobs – for many years to come.